



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Middle Arkansas River basin work group to meet August 21

Water users developing management strategies for sustained water system

TOPEKA – A work group of water users in the Middle Arkansas River basin will meet from 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 21, at the Jordan Community Center, 502 Broadway, in Larned, to discuss water management strategies that will ensure a sustained, healthy groundwater and surface water system within the subbasin.

The group, which is made up of industrial, municipal, domestic, recreation and irrigation water interests, has been meeting about every six weeks for the past three years to develop management strategies based on scientific data provided by the Kansas Geological Survey, Groundwater Management District #5 and the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources.

Currently, the group is exploring methods for measuring water savings they expect to achieve using the water management strategies they are developing. They also are finalizing the analysis by which they will determine if there is a water shortage in the subbasin. Field verification activities currently underway by the Division of Water Resources and the Kansas Geological Survey will also be considered.

The water management strategies being developed are intended to protect vested and senior water rights, and to maintain minimum desirable streamflow in the Middle Arkansas River at Kinsley and Great Bend, when water use exceeds recharge through streamflow or precipitation. The strategies are intended as an alternative to water rights administration by the Division of Water Resources.

The group plans to submit its draft management strategies to the chief engineer of the Division of Water Resources between January and March 2003. If the chief engineer approves them, hearings will be scheduled to accept public comment. The entire process should be complete by June 30, 2003.

The work group is being guided through the strategy building process by the Subbasin Water Resource Management Program, a special project funded by the state water plan and implemented by the Division of Water Resources.

Since 1993, the program has focused on addressing groundwater declines, streamflow depletions and related water quality concerns within individual subbasins. All water sources within an area are considered when helping subbasin water users develop long-term management strategies.

All water users in the subbasin are encouraged to attend work group meetings and to offer input to ensure that management strategies are fair for all users. More information about the meeting, and the strategy-building process, is available by calling the Subbasin Water Resource Management Program at (785) 296-3705.

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On the Web: www.accesskansas.org/kda/dwr/basinteam/index.html